

*to Evangelical Religion.*

been made, the Christians also had their Caliph Omar, and their General Amrou.

LETTER V.

THE injurious causes which I have thus far considered, are associated immediately with the *object*, and, by misrepresenting it, render it less acceptable to refined taste; but there are others, which operate by perverting the very principles of this taste itself, so as to put it in antipathy to the religion of Christ, even though presented in its *own* full and genuine character, cleared of all these associations. I shall remark chiefly on one of these causes.

I fear it is incontrovertible, that what is denominated Polite Literature, the grand school in which taste acquires its laws and refined perceptions, and in which are formed, much more than under any higher austere discipline, the moral sentiments, is, for the far greater part, hostile to the religion of Christ; partly, by introducing insensibly a certain order of opinions unconsonant, or at least not identical, with the principles of that religion; and still more, by training the feelings to a habit alien from its spirit. And in this assertion, I do not refer to writers palpably irreligious, who have laboured and intended to seduce the passions into vice, or the judgment into the rejection of divine truth; but to the general community of those elegant and ingenious authors who are read and admired by the Christian world, held essential to a liberal education and to the progressive accomplishment of the mind in subsequent life, and studied often without an apprehension, or even a thought, of their injuring the views and temper of spirits advancing, with a New Testament for their chief instructor and guide, into another world.

It is *modern* literature that I have more particularly in view; at the same time, it is obvious that the writings of heathen antiquity have continued to operate till now, in the very presence and sight of Christianity, with their own proper influence, a correctly heathenish influence, on the minds of many who have never thought of denying or doubting the truth of that religion. This is just as if an eloquent pagan priest had been allowed constantly to accom-